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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/540,418

06/24/2005

Riki Okamoto

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EXAMINER

YEE, DEBORAH

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1793

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/540,418	Applicant(s) Riki Okamoto et al.	
	Examiner Deborah Yee	Art Unit 1793	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 February 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 24 June 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>2/25/08</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1 to 3 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1 to 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese patent 11-323480 (hereinafter Yoshitaka et al.), which was cited by Applicants in IDS dated February 25, 2008.
4. The English abstract of Yoshitaka et al. teaches a hot rolled steel sheet having a composition with constituents whose wt% ranges overlap those recited by the claims; such overlap establishes a prima facie case of obviousness since it would be obvious for one skilled in the art to select the claimed alloy wt% ranges over the broader disclosure of the prior art because the prior art teaches the same utility (automotive components) and similar properties such as high tensile strength of at least 590 N/ mm² and high toughness.
5. In addition, prior art steel exhibits a microstructure having ≥ 40 vol.% of ferrite with a grain size of ≤ 2 μ m or more, which overlaps with Applicants' claimed range of \geq

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40 vol.% ferrite with a grain size of $\geq 2 \mu\text{m}$. Also the computer-generated English translation in paragraph [0021] teaches bainite can be included with microstructure.

6. More specifically, prior art steel 7g in table 1 meets the claimed composition except for 0.2% C which is higher than the claimed C range of 0.02 to 0.08%.

Nevertheless it would be obvious to decrease C content since a broad range of 0.05 to 0.6% is taught. Also when calculated, equations (1) and (2) are met.

7. Claims 1 to 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over European patent 0974677 (hereinafter Kawano et al.) which was cited by Applicants in IDS dated February 25, 2008.

8. Kawano et al. in claims 1 to 9 discloses a hot rolled steel sheet having a composition with constituents whose wt% ranges overlap those recited by the claims; such overlap establishes a prima facie case of obviousness since it would be obvious for one skilled in the art to select the claimed alloy wt% ranges over the broader disclosure of the prior art because the prior art teaches the same utility (automotive components) and similar properties such as high tensile strength at $\geq 590 \text{ N/mm}^2$ and high toughness.

9. Also prior art steel exhibits a microstructure having a dominant phase comprising a mixture of ferrite and bainite wherein ferrite is preferably $\geq 40 \text{ vol.}\%$ and wherein dominant phase has an average grain size of $\leq 6 \mu\text{m}$, which would overlap and suggest Applicants' claimed microstructure of $\geq 40 \text{ vol.}\%$ ferrite with a grain size of $\geq 2 \mu\text{m}$ in addition to bainite.

10. More specifically, prior art steel 26 in table 5 on page 24 meets the claimed composition except for 0.14% C which is higher than the claimed C range of 0.02 to 0.08%. Nevertheless it would be obvious to decrease C content since a broad C range of 0.03 to 0.3% is taught. Also when calculated, equations (1) and (2) are met. Hence claims would not patentably distinguish over prior art.

Conclusion

11. Applicant's submission of an information disclosure statement under 37 CFR 1.97(c) with the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(p) on February 25, 2008 prompted the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 609.04(b). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Deborah Yee whose telephone number is 571-272-1253. The examiner can normally be reached on monday-friday 6:00 am-2:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Roy King can be reached on 571-272-1244. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Deborah Yee/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1793

/DY/